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[Drake, Samuel Gardner]

A review of Winthrop's journal.



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[Drake Samuel "Mother"]

A REVIEW

OF

WINTHROP'S JOURNAL,

AS EDITED AND PUBLISHED BY THE HON. JAMES SAVAGE,

UNDER THE TITLE OF

"THE HISTORY OF NEW-ENGLAND FROM 1630 TO 1649.
BY JOHN WINTHROP, ESQ." &c. &c.

PREPARED FOR AND PUBLISHED IN

The New England Historical and Genealogical Register,

OCTOBER, 1853, AND JANUARY, 1854.

BY THE EDITOR OF THAT PERIODICAL.

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No. 37, Congress Street.

1854.



REVIEW OF SAVAGE'S WINTHROP.

The History of New England, from 1630 to 1649. By JOHN WINTHROP, Esq., *First Governour of the Colony of the Massachusetts Bay. From his original Manuscripts. With Notes to illustrate the Civil and Ecclesiastical Concerns, the Geography, Settlement, and Institutions of the Country, and the Lives and Manners of the Principal Planters.* By JAMES SAVAGE, President of the Massachusetts Historical Society. A new Edition, with Additions by the former Editor. Boston: Little, Brown & Company, MDCCCLIII. 2 vols. 8vo, pp. 1018.

WHEN a work claiming to be a History of New England makes its appearance, we feel bound to bestow something more than a passing notice upon it; especially so if the work comes down from the days of the early Pilgrims. Such the work purports to be, and such the work is, the title of which stands at the head of this notice. The original work not only claims special attention, but it comes to us enriched by a descendant of the early Pilgrims to New England, who has a reputation for his knowledge of the times included in the work, which few possess; a knowledge which half a century of application only can give. And, our work being, in its broadest sense, a NEW ENGLAND WORK, designed as a treasury of the History of New England, we shall readily be pardoned, we think, for the space we have devoted to an examination of one of the chief corner stones of its history.

Vastly have the things of time changed, and vastly has the face of New England, nay, of the whole universal world changed, since the Fathers of New England stepped upon the barren sands of Plymouth, and since the rocky point of Cape Ann afforded a resting place to a few weary and sea-worn mariners. Those people, few indeed, if any of them, thought or imagined that this then "desolate end of the earth," as they used to say, would ever be anything but a dreary refuge for the objects of persecution. Yet there are a few instances which seem to indicate that here and there a solitary individual hoped something might grow out of their undertaking. Hence such individuals took care to make records of their early experience in the land of their adoption. Such individuals, however, may have penned such records more with a view of returning with them to their native land, than with any expectation that they would be of

use where they were made. Under these considerations was that incomparable work of "G. Mourt" made at Plymouth. Many others, though of less value, might be mentioned.

What confidence Governor John Winthrop had at first in the permanence of his undertaking to settle a Colony in New England, cannot be certainly ascertained; while it is certain that he intended, whatever the result might be, that its origin and progress should be matter of record. Therefore, from the first, he kept a Diary of whatever occurred which he thought might be of importance on a future review of what had transpired. Of this Diary or Journal it is proposed to speak somewhat at length in this notice. We have been induced to undertake the task from several considerations. These considerations will appear as we proceed. Meanwhile, however, we would premise, that what has mainly influenced us to make a somewhat formal review of the work, is our opinion that no other would undertake it; or if any did undertake it, they might from some covert influences pass lightly over it, not bestowing that attention to it which its importance imperatively demands. While at the same time we wish it distinctly understood, that we consider ourself among the least able of those conversant in the subjects treated of, to do the work justice; and that we have ventured upon it with the fullest conviction of our inability to handle the matter as it deserves to be handled; and as was said before, we have adventured upon the task, believing it better to be poorly done than not to be done at all.

One other consideration will be mentioned, and then we shall proceed to the subject proposed. This arises from a fact well understood by the Reviewers, as well as the Reviewed; namely, that reviews, being, for the most part, "written to order," the works pretended to be *reviewed* are lauded or decried according to the nature of the *order*. And it too often happens, that a work is praised far above its merits, if it have any, and, that a very meritorious work will be written *down* as one of no merit.

It should also be borne in mind, that a review of a work, written independently of any trammels, either from the author of the work reviewed, or from the editor of a review, however just or well written his review may be, its writer can feel sure of but one thing, and that is the rejection of his article, "for want of room," or its not being done in accordance with the ideas of the conductor of the review, of what such an article should be.—We therefore, independent of any trammels, and without bias or prejudice, for the benefit of New England history, propose to express, though with deference, our opinion of Winthrop's Journal, and the manner in which it has been edited.

In respect to the value of Winthrop's Journal, there never has been, probably, from the time of the Historian Hubbard to this day, but one opinion among all persons who have paid the least attention to the history

of the first settlement of New England; and that opinion is, that there does not remain a document upon the beginnings in any part of the world, of such immense importance. It is true there are in it many defects and seeming omissions. We should not be at all surprised at this, but we should rather be surprised that there are not a great many more of them. These defects and omissions the Author would have essentially lessened, in all probability, had his life been longer spared, and his situation been favorable for a thorough revision of his work. That he intended such a revision there cannot be much doubt; for no man, scholar as John Winthrop was, would have allowed his rough notes, made in the woods, and under every unfavorable circumstance, to go to the press without being compiled anew. These reflections lead us to consider the *title* given to the rough notes of Winthrop by his Editor, the Honorable James Savage.

As we have seen by the transcript of its title-page at the commencement of this article, he has entitled it "The History of New England," &c. As a reason for giving it so pretending a title, the Editor says, "it may be desirable for the reader to understand, that it is the exact language of the Author."* But then, in his next sentence he adds, "in the first volume of MS. indeed it is not used, nor is any other designation given to the book;" but that, "both the other MS. volumes begin, 'A Continuation of the History of New England.'" Now this only shows that a History of New England was an afterthought of Winthrop, and that the idea occurred to him, that at some future period his work might be used in compiling a History of New England. The work has pretty nearly its appropriate title in the edition of it published at Hartford, in 1790, which is in these words:—"A Journal of the Transactions and Occurrences in the Settlement of Massachusetts and the other New England Colonies," &c.

Now no book is properly entitled, unless that title exactly corresponds to its contents. An author who may leave a quantity of materials for a work, may leave them far short of the work he intended to make. Such appear to have been the memoranda left by Governor Winthrop; and the utmost comprehensiveness that could be given to a title of them, would be "Materials *towards* a History of New England." And had the Publisher or Editor of the Hartford edition made his title read, "A Journal of Transactions and Occurrences," and so on, as above extracted, there could be no fault found with it, so far. Hence every one may reflect, that however important, and however valuable a work, or fragment of a work may be, that importance or value does not authorize us to give it a false title.

* He afterwards refers to *Mass. Hist. Colls.* 2, iv, 200, but the article there, upon Winthrop's manuscript Journal, does not corroborate his statement.

It is well understood that Noah Webster, Junior, Esquire, superintended the publication of the Hartford edition of Winthrop's Journal. It is likewise well understood that Mr. Webster's labors upon that edition extended only to the above named supervision, and the preparation of its Preface. But that we may do no injustice to Doctor Webster, he shall be allowed to speak for himself. He says, in his Preface, "The following Journal was written by John Winthrop, Esq., the first Governor* of Massachusetts. . . . He kept a Journal of every† important occurrence, from his first embarking for America, in 1630, to the year 1644.‡ This Manuscript, as appears by some passages, was originally designed for publication;§ and it was formerly consulted by the first compilers of New England history, particularly by HUBBARD, MATHER, and PRINCE. But it continued unpublished and uncopied, in possession of the elder branch of the family, till the late revolution, when GOVERNOR TRUMBULL of Connecticut procured it, and with the assistance of his secretary, copied a considerable part of it. Soon after the Governor's death, a gentleman,|| who has a taste for examining curious original papers, which respect his own country, came, by accident, to a knowledge of this manuscript; and with consent of the Governor's heirs, contracted for a copy, merely for his own improvement and amusement. On reading the work, he found it contained many curious and interesting facts, relating to the settlement of Massachusetts and the other New England Colonies, and highly descriptive of the character and views of the first inhabitants. This suggested to him the design of publishing the Journal *complete*; as any abridgment of it would tend to weaken its historical evidence, and put in the power of captious critics to impeach its authenticity. By consent of the descendants of Gov. Winthrop, proposals were issued for publishing a small number of copies. The copy here presented to the public, was made by JOHN PORTER, Esq., the Secretary of the late Gov. Trumbull, whose declaration, respecting its accuracy, is here annexed. It is an extract from his letter to the Editor."

'Agreeable to your request, I send you a copy of Gov. Winthrop's history. The transcribing has required more labor than I at first expected. I carefully examined the original, and on comparing, found many errors in the first copy; which, upon further experience in reading the original, I have been able to correct; as also to fill up many blanks. This has caused me much study, and retarded the completion of

* We shall point out the origin of his mistaking Winthrop for the *first* Governor in its proper place.

† An unguarded expression, entirely untrue in point of fact.

‡ It must be remembered that that Editor had not the whole Journal of Winthrop.

§ The memoranda in the original authorizing this statement, were made probably to call the Author's own attention to certain passages, if he should prepare it for the press.

|| Doctor Webster himself, whose name does not appear in the work.

the business for some time. You will observe some blanks in the present copy—some of them are so in the original—but, excepting the blanks, I believe this may be depended on as a genuine copy.*

“The original is in the handwriting common to that age;† and is not read without difficulty. The first copy was made during Gov. Trumbull's life, and part of it by the Governor himself. The last copy, here given to the world, was taken from the first, and throughout the whole, compared with the original. The blanks are few, and, as the reader will observe, of no considerable consequence.”‡

As whatever relates to the history of Governor Winthrop's original manuscripts, from which his “History of New England” is printed, as we now have it, is of much interest, we next give an extract from Mr. Savage's Preface to his editions of them.—“Early in the spring of 1816 was discovered,§ in the tower of the Old South Church in Boston, the third volume of the History of New England, in the original MS. of the author, John Winthrop, first governor of the Massachusetts Bay. When the precious book was presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society,|| at their next meeting, 25 April, the difficulty of transcribing it for the press seemed to appall several of the most competent members, whose engagement in more important duties afforded also a sufficient excuse for leaving such labor to be undertaken by any one, at any time, who could devote to it many weeks of leisure. The task appeared inviting to me. On the same evening the MS. was taken, and the study of its chirography was begun, the next day, by the aid of one of the former MSS., collated with the printed volume, usually called Winthrop's Journal.”

Such is a brief history of the bringing to light Winthrop's Journal, which had lain in manuscript 131 years before it was partially printed in 1790, and 166 years before it was printed entire.

Notwithstanding Mr. Savage went to his “task” with superior advantages, it is truly our opinion, that there was no other man in New England, between 1816 and 1825, who could, or would if he could, have rendered Winthrop so intelligible as Mr. Savage has done. We say he went to his task with superior advantages; by which we mean, that his critical knowledge of the early men and affairs of New England gave him an advantage—peculiarly his own—that few men, if any, at that time possessed. Without a minute and thorough knowledge of that description, any one

* Dated, “Lebanon, January 1st, 1788.” Signed “JOHN PORTER.”

† In this the Editor was mistaken. Winthrop's writing may be said to be unlike that of any other man's.

‡ This was merely Mr. Webster's opinion, and he ought to have stated it as an opinion. The fact is quite otherwise.

§ By the late Hon. Samuel T. Armstrong, as he himself informed the writer.

|| We are not informed who presented it.

undertaking to decipher Winthrop must have committed blunders at every step. This was a decided and indispensable requisite, and this was happily enjoyed by Mr. Savage. Another advantage he had, which, though he seems inadequately to have acknowledged, is easily inferred from his preface. This was the labors of John Porter, Esq. This gentleman's efforts upon the portion of Winthrop published at Hartford must have been far greater than one would be likely to imagine, merely by reading the extract from his letter to Mr. Webster, which we have given above. Knowing as we do what time it costs to learn the chirography of Winthrop, and assuming that Mr. Porter was not a critic in our early history, we cannot but marvel that he made a transcript of Winthrop as good as he did. But poor as was Mr. Porter's copy, it unquestionably saved Mr. Savage some months of labor, and it would have been no discredit to him to have acknowledged it. Those only who have had such aids in deciphering old manuscripts, know how to estimate them.

Notwithstanding Mr. Savage copied Mr. Webster's introductory matter into his first edition of Winthrop, including Mr. Porter's letter to Mr. Webster, he held the latter responsible for all the mistakes he could discover in the first edition; often treating his labors in that edition (for so he would consider them) as old schoolmasters used to treat those scholars they were pleased to denominate *dunces*. But from a note to Mr. Webster's preface, as printed in Mr. Savage's new edition, it seems, that at some period after he issued his *first* edition, he saw Dr. Webster, and that the Doctor told him he had never read Winthrop's original manuscript. Did Mr. Savage *require* to be told this by Dr. Webster or anybody else, after reading Mr. Webster's preface? It is true Mr. Webster does not say in so many words that "he never read Winthrop's manuscript," but from what he does say, no one *could* even *presume* that he had read it. No. Mr. Webster employed the most competent man then probably in Connecticut to make him a copy of Winthrop, for which no doubt he paid liberally, and was the means of its being printed and published; and it was owing to that circumstance, beyond question, that we of this age are favored with not only "Winthrop's Journal," but with "Winthrop's History of New England," also.

In the note of Mr. Savage just referred to, instead of acknowledging the wrong he did Dr. Webster, by attributing to him errors which he never committed, he coolly states, that "caution is due to the reader, lest by misunderstanding the language of Mr. Webster's preface, the proper merit of Mr. Secretary Porter be transferred to the Editor." This is a poor apology, indeed, for making one responsible for the errors of another. Now we cannot see the least reason for cautioning the *reader*, lest *he* should misunderstand Mr. Webster, whose language is perfectly clear and simple, and contains nothing equivocal.

We come now to examine, to some extent, the manner in which Mr. Savage has executed his task as Editor of Governor Winthrop's Diaries or Journals, which he has dignified with the title of "The History of New England." We have not space to notice everything that is to be met with deserving notice in Mr. Savage's notes. That he has given us a better text of Winthrop, in almost every respect, probably, than any other could or would have given, has already been acknowledged. That he could do without bias or prejudice; for his own views and notions could not enter into that part of his labor; and it is our opinion that his fidelity in that respect will not be questioned. There is, however, one serious objection to the manner in which he has printed Winthrop's text. We allude to the liberty he has taken with its orthography; for we hold that it is a very great mistake in an editor to print a work like Winthrop's Journal otherwise than he wrote it; we mean it is a great mistake to print such works without preserving their exact orthography. To undertake to reduce them to our standard in that respect, is to falsify them—giving us but part of an author while we are promised the whole. It would be more just to the author to rewrite his work. To print John Winthrop's Journal in the orthography of the nineteenth century is as unjust to him as it would be to paint a cavalier of Cromwell's time in the attire of Count d'Orsay. It is rarely if ever done by thorough antiquaries;—no matter what their orthography was. How are we to judge of the literature of those days without specimens of it?

Before proceeding to review the notes of the Editor, we have an observation to make relative to the manner in which the text is disposed in connection with its legitimate marginal accompaniments. By these marginal accompaniments we mean the chronology belonging to, and constituting a part of the text. We venture to say we were among the first purchasers of Mr. Savage's volumes as they appeared, one after the other, in 1825 and 1826. We were then young, and had had small experience in what constituted taste in these matters of printing a historical work, but we well remember turning over the leaves of that edition with something of vexation at the manner in which the dates were printed. One must, in nine cases out of ten, turn backward or forward before he can ascertain the date of any fact; and then he must stumble over bracket after bracket, placed to keep figures from running away, which figures so pent up are as unintelligible as the brackets without them. Now all this difficulty—and it is a serious one to anybody who has occasion to consult the work—might have been remedied without expense or trouble, merely by placing the month as well as the year in the top margin of the page, and the day of the month with it, where entries extend beyond a page, which is very frequently the case.

It was hoped that when a new edition was prepared this glaring defect would have been remedied, but whoever entertained such a hope entertained it only to be disappointed. The new edition came, and instead of the difficulty being lessened, it was increased—another set of figures was indented into the print. These are distinguished from the others, however, by being accompanied with an asterisk. These denote the paging of the 1825-6 edition. Though there ought to have been no particular necessity for preserving the paging to that edition, yet that, in itself, is of not much moment; but, that the Index of the new edition should refer to this old paging is intolerable, and will lead to more confusion hereafter, than the Editor could probably have dreamed of. Had there been no paging to the new edition, except the old, it would not have been so objectionable. The question has been frequently asked, Why does the Index of the new edition refer to the paging of the old edition? We confess we do not know, unless it was to save the very trifling expense which it might have required to make the Index conform to the paging of the new. And, we are sorry to be obliged to add to this, that the Index is a very imperfect and poor affair, altogether unworthy such a work—imperfect in every respect.

We agree with the Editor in his estimation of the value of Chronology, as one of “the best elements of truth in history,” and it would have been well for him if he had had an eye to several of his notes which he made in reference to 1825; which, being transferred to 1853 without modification, may cause some readers to think as poorly of his time table, as he does of Cotton Mather’s. Against this last named Author, we may remark in passing, he seems to have, as did Hannibal against Rome, “sworn eternal war.” He can never mention his name without a sneer or a jeer. This is a pity, but so it is. He seems never to have reflected that different trees are necessary and even useful, in the wilderness of mankind, as well as in the natural wilderness. But we do not intend to make a special defence of Dr. Mather.

On dismissing some eighteen pages of prefatory matter, the reader comes to the first page of the invaluable Journal of Governor Winthrop, beginning, “Easter Monday, March 29, Anno Domini, 1630. Riding at the Cowes, near the Isle of Wight, in the Arbella, a ship of three hundred and fifty tons,” &c. The Editor’s first note is upon the name of the ship—the “Arbella;” and in our opinion, a half a page, or thereabouts, of his work, could not have been more unprofitably employed, than in an attempt to prove that everybody, except Winthrop, was wrong in writing that name *Arabella*. Whims are quite harmless sometimes, and this has already found a place among the harmless class of whimsicalities, and ladies who happened to be named Arabella, will write their names *Ara-bella* still, we have no manner of doubt.

The reader would wrong the Editor if he were to judge all his notes by this on "Arbella;" but it is unlucky that it happened to be his first; for, as we have elsewhere said, they sometimes discover much research, are often appropriate, and of great service to a student in the history of the times of Winthrop. But no man can be expected to know everything, or to know unerringly all he may think he is quite sure of. This is a consideration which did not probably occur to the Editor of Winthrop, judging from the manner he handles many whose knowledge in some particulars fell short of his own. He ought to have reflected, that he was not making notes for those who knew as much or more than he did about the matters treated of in Winthrop's work, but that his business was to enlighten those who had not the means or ability to enlighten themselves. Had he kept this in view he would have done quite as good service as he has done without it.

While speaking of the Editor's marginal chronology, we omitted to remark upon an important omission in the arrangement he chose to adopt. We refer to the year at the top of his pages. He has followed the old chronology, beginning the year on the 25th of March, and ending it, of course, on the 24th of the following March. This is all as it should be. What we complain of is, that he did not, after the 1st of January of each year, make his figures denote, that in the text, the Author had passed the 1st of January. He well knew how to do this, equally well preserving the ancient chronology. As it now stands, accompanied only by a single bracket in a whole folio, with a naked figure quite as mute, no reader can tell whether the facts recorded are in January or December, without the vexation of turning backward or forward indefinitely. If, when he came to January, 1635, for example, he had just added to that date -6, and continued that additional dash and figure 6, (thus 1635-6,) to the ensuing 25th of March, and so on in each year, that awkward defect would have been obviated.

One peculiarity, glaringly obvious in the notes to Winthrop's Journal, more particularly so in the notes to the new edition, will be here noticed once for all. We refer to their invidious character, especially in the use of or reference to his authorities. We might give numerous instances, but it is not necessary. In several respects, the edition of 1825-6, has an advantage over this of 1853, but the emendations and additions to the last may more than offset the disadvantages alluded to. For ourself, we are free to confess, that the value and amount of the additions to the new edition fall a great way short of what we had anticipated. Perhaps we expected altogether too much; but feeling quite sure that the Editor had, for the quarter of a century which had fully elapsed between his editions, devoted himself to the study of the early affairs of New England,

and had made a voyage across the Atlantic to increase his knowledge in the same field, we thought we had a right to expect very important additions to his new edition of Winthrop. We do not mean to be understood by this, that there are not valuable and important additions, but that they are far less numerous and important than we expected to see.

We make these remarks, first, because, from his title-page we have a right to expect, that his "additions and corrections" would, at least, place his new edition on a sort of level with the times, in respect to the investigations and discoveries which had been published, long before *he* re-published. Of course it was not to be expected that he would dive into *every* obscure publication, that no light should escape him, however dim, but that he should entirely overlook the labors of such a gentleman as William Willis of Portland, for example, savors of something which can hardly be attributed to ignorance. We have not space to particularize, but he would, we think, have had the thanks of his readers, had he just referred to Mr. Willis's history of Portland, as his notes admonish him, in many places. This brings us to remark, secondly, upon the invidious character of some of the notes in respect to the mention of authorities: for instance, we do not think it just to single out Mr. B. as "the diligent historian of S.," while the "diligence" of Mr. F. in the same field is more than four fold that of the former. There would be no injustice done Mr. B. had the labors of Mr. F. been quite as honorably mentioned. So we hear of the "invaluable" work of Mr. O., who has labored a season or two, and may have produced a very tolerable work, while the labors of Mr. W., though brought forth without ostentation, are infinitely more laborious, and not less valuable than those of Mr. O.

It is very unfortunate for the reputation of a historian, if he is so opinionated or prejudiced that he *will* not be set right when he is clearly wrong; that he will not patiently receive a suggestion, unless it come to him from those whom *he* happens to consider high authority, or from a suppliant, who feels amply paid for his service by a condescension to be noticed. A great deal has come to light since Mr. Savage published his first edition, from various quarters, to which his readers would have been gladly directed by him. How he has regarded these reasonable expectations will be noticed, to some extent, as we progress.

There is necessarily a great inequality in the modern notes to any ancient work. On some points the Annotator may readily find all he desires to illustrate them, while upon others he may feel compelled to say something, when in reality he has nothing to say, and hence ought to say nothing. The Editor of Winthrop felt all these difficulties, and perhaps steered as clear of them as any one would. His notes swell the

bulk of Winthrop nearly one-third ; at the same time there are but few of them we would dispense with altogether. They might, indeed, be cut down considerably without cutting out much information.

One of the most marked features of the notes of Mr. Savage, is their peculiar theological bias ; and yet it will probably quite as much puzzle the general reader to form an opinion as to the tenets held by their author, as it has puzzled the biographers of Samuel Gorton to define those of that singular man. One thing, however, is tolerably certain, namely, that the author is a real Ishmaelite among tenets, and it would have been quite as well for his theological reputation if he had let discussions of that nature entirely alone.

On page 5,* Volume I, Mr. Savage says of Isaac Johnson, that he was "formerly regarded as the founder of Boston, where it is not probable that he ever passed a single night." In his first edition his note read, that "this gentleman, who is usually regarded as the founder of Boston," &c. The clause, "where it is not probable that he ever passed a single night," is interpolated in his new edition, and for which he gives no reason whatever ; nor does he refer to Prince's Annals, to which every reader should be referred, in which work, and in Hutchinson's Massachusetts, are to be found statements not to be discredited by a single dash of any modern pen. The matter of Johnson's burial has lately been ably presented in the Daily Evening Transcript of Nov. 4th, 1853.

At page 29 we are informed, "Here is inserted, on a whole page of the original MS., a chart of the shore of Maine, Isles of Shoals, Boone Isle, Cape Ann, etc., with remarks on the appearance of the various landmarks on the several days, depth of water, bottom, bearings, distances, etc."—We are surprised that this should have been omitted by the Editor, and in all deference to his judgment in that capacity, we think we have lost a good deal more by that omission, than if a half dozen pages of the Journal containing those details about *monsters*, &c., had been omitted. We do not say that we should have omitted even these ; but to omit the only drawing in the whole work is exercising a liberty with the original, which no one could expect to be taken.

In page 39, the Editor speaks of a work of William Aspinwall, as some writers of the present day speak of those who believe the end of the world to be near at hand. Aspinwall published a tract which he entitled "A brief Description of the Fifth Monarchy, or Kingdom that shortly is to come," &c. Mr. Savage says, "Its title-page is garnished with several texts of scripture, distorted in the usual style of that day." What he means by "texts of scripture distorted," he may know, but we confess we

* The paging of the 2d edition of Winthrop will be observed.

do not. Suiting his remarks to his extracts he says, "Proceeding through his inquiries of 'the Sovereign, (Jesus Christ,) subjects, officers, and laws of that Kingdom,' his fanatical vaticination favors us with 'some hint of the time when the Kingdom shall begin,' which he had wit enough to delay so long, that the event might not probably injure the credit of the *living* soothsayer. 'Know, therefore, that the uttermost durance of Antichrist's dominion will be in the year 1673, as I have proved from scripture in a brief Chronology, ready to be put forth.' Cromwell, whose power was just then preparing to be established, knew well the dangerous tendency of such jargon, unless when used by himself; but though he applied the civil arm to many other dreamers of King Jesus, I believe he left the New England Seer to the safety of oblivion or contempt." Had the Editor been writing about Cotton Mather, whom he will not allow a shade of honesty or sincerity, we might have expected any kind of "jargon," but such raillery at the meek and sincere Aspinwall, is entirely out of place. He has accused him of hypocrisy, and both unnecessarily and absurdly coupled Cromwell with him in the offence. If Aspinwall were a "dreamer of King Jesus," so was the great Cotton, and so were all of Cotton's true followers.

In a note to "Capt. Mason," p. 266, he goes on to make him the same "Lieut. Mason," who, in 1632, was sent to the eastern coast after a pirate. Now he has no evidence, or if he has he does not produce it, that Capt. John Mason was in the country before 1634-5. There was a Hugh Mason at Watertown, who may have been in the country in 1632, and this was the man, in all probability, who went in pursuit of the pirate. He was denominated "Lieut. Mason," while John Mason of Pequot memory *never* was, we think, called "Lieut. Mason" in this country.

Regarding the authorship of "A Short Story of the Rise, Reign, and Ruin of the Antinomians, Familists, and Libertines that infected the Churches of New England," &c., in his first edition of Winthrop the Editor charges it upon Thomas Welde, and abuses him in unmeasured terms for the virulence of its contents. Long before he published his second edition, his error in attributing it to Welde was, we have good reason to believe, pointed out to him. Indeed, how one could read the "Short Story," in connection with Winthrop's Journal, and then charge the authorship of the former to Thomas Welde, is, to say the least, most unaccountable, when the authorship of the body of that work is as clearly Winthrop's as his own Journal. And, it may safely be affirmed, that, if Welde wrote the Short Story, he also wrote Winthrop's Journal.

What then should have been the course of the Editor in his new edition of Winthrop? Should he not, in justice to the memory of Mr. Welde, have made some amends for the wrong done him in his first? He has not had the

magnanimity to do anything of the kind, but has repeated all he said before, and attempted to fortify it against further attacks. Thus he vaunts in his preface :—"Exposure of the infirmity of unhappy Thomas Welde, in his Short Story of the Rise, Reign and Ruin of Antinomianism, will compensate, I think, the curious hunter in bibliography." This is one of his peculiar sentences, and by it he means, or we understand him to mean, that he has, in further exposing Welde, done something for the reader in bibliography. "Unhappy Thomas Welde." He does not mean by this that Mr. Welde was more unhappy than other men probably. The reader of Mr. Savage's notes will often find that "unhappy" adjective, quite as *happily* applied to other individuals.

Beginning at page 298, we find about two pages in small type, devoted to "unhappy Thomas Welde." We have seen at different times, all the books remarked upon relative to this subject, and we must acknowledge, after some examination of them, and the Editor's long note upon them also, that we find no reason to charge anything upon Mr. Welde, beyond what he has himself acknowledged; and it is our firm conviction, that whatever Mr. Welde did, he did under the direction, or by the advice of the dominant party here. And, that the wholesale branding of him by the Editor, amounts only to this, namely,—a determination on his part, to "make out a case." He should remember, that writing history is one thing, and defending a bad cause before an intelligent jury is another. Unhappily he seems incapable of making the distinction. *Sape intereunt aliis meditantes necem*.—There is nothing clearer that one has a bad cause, or that he has undertaken on the wrong side, than the fact that he resorts to abuse to sustain his assertions. He charges that, what Mr. Welde wrote and put his name to, was "altogether a pretence on the part of the virulent pamphleteer;" that he was "over cunning" in making false title-pages, "to mystify a heedless observer;" what might have been, and no doubt was, a printer's error, he calls "a sneaking device" at deception; and in an air of triumph, closes his long note, with, "perhaps the reader may think I have derived too much gratification from disclosing the shameless infirmity or petty malice of the ecclesiastical historian. Let it go for the least skilful of all attempts at deception."

After all this, we candidly think his "much gratification" will soon be, if it be not already, at an end. The jury of the public will set the matter right in due time, and it would have been prudent for the Advocate to have withheld his exultation until a verdict was rendered; for he should remember, that he is not Judge and Jury too. In an earlier notice of Mr. Welde and his "Short Story," (page 248), he says, "The work has not, I presume, been often quoted within a century;" and yet *we* know that it has been *very* often quoted within a quarter of a century.

The following reflections do not at all harmonize with the manner in which Mr. Welde is handled :—

There is a “strange note” of above a page, beginning on page 306, in which the Annotator goes into the question of the “resurrection of the body.” We can see no other object which he could have had in view, except to let the reader know that he had consulted some learned authors upon that subject; from which we may infer, that his own opinion agreed with that “profound and original philosopher,” Abraham Tucker.

In 1638, a woman was executed at Boston for infanticide, and it is melancholy to consider, that she must have committed the act while in a deranged state of mind. What the following reflection of the Editor has to do with the facts, we are unable to discover. He says, “Perhaps Peter [who merely attended at the execution in his clerical capacity] regretted his treatment of Talby [that being the name of the executed woman] after his own wife was distracted.” [Insane.] Why is Peter singled out in this way, as though he must have been conscious of participating in the murder of a crazy woman? Why are not Wilson and Winthrop arraigned under some misfortune, and taunted in like manner? Was Mr. Peter in fault because his wife became insane? We believe no such charge can be supported by evidence. Mr. Peter (or Peters as his name is more usually written) was an active, and energetic man. He entered into what he believed to be his duty and the will of God; of all such duties he acquitted himself manfully. But our Editor could not divest himself of the rancorous feelings which he had imbibed in reading some of the books about him, the productions of hireling vilifiers, whose name was legion, immediately after the *in-glorious* restoration. Mr. Peters perished by the hand of the mercenary murderer, but his memory should be safe in the hands of a faithful historian of New England. The despicable minions of power have injured the reputation of many an honest man in his time. The cause of Peters was the cause of New England, and he perished for doing more than many others had courage to do.

Extremes often meet in the same individual. Few men have more sagacity, probably, to detect minute errors and discrepancies than Mr. Savage, and his opinions upon questionable points of such nature are more worthy to be trusted than family traditions. But this peculiar talent is not ample security that he will never commit some signal blunders himself. We cite a case in point, for the double purpose of showing how easily a very shrewd investigator may blunder; and when he has blundered, how loath he may be to acknowledge it.

In Winthrop's Journal published at Hartford, page 114, is this passage. “Board was at 9 and 10s. the C., carpenters at 3s. the day, and other work accordingly.” Mr. Savage had, perhaps before consulting the printed

copy, transcribed from the original manuscript—"Bread was at 9 and 10s. the C.; carpenters at 3s. the day," &c. In his over-anxiety continually to find errors in the Hartford copy, he seized upon this as one, but notes, "The MS. looks very much like the reading of the former edition, which was ridiculous." That is, it "was ridiculous" that *boards* should be sold at 9 and 10s. the hundred feet, while selling *bread* at those rates was a plain common-sense matter!

But the worst is to come. President Allen, in his notice of Winthrop in his American Biographical Dictionary, playfully pointed out the above blunder of Mr. Savage, and his attention was subsequently called to the correction. Did he make the correction in his new edition? No. *Bread* is left to disfigure Winthrop's text, and will probably disfigure it until another edition is called for by the Public.

Again. On page 207, under date of 28th of November, 1635, Winthrop records the arrival of "a small Norsey bark, sent out by the Lords Say, &c." To the name *Norsey* Mr. Savage makes this note. "I never saw this word before; but cannot doubt that it is the same gentilitial as Norwegian, or of the North Country. *Norse* is common with the "poets and others." Now the Author of this note often pries into Winthrop's "and so forths," and had he given but slight attention to this, he would have found it to contain Lord Brook, Sir Arthur Heslerigge, and Sir Matthew Boynton.* These last named gentlemen were all interested with Lord Say, and were not mentioned by Winthrop by name, as being well enough known in the undertaking. Mr. S. would have found that one of the undertakers of the enterprise lived at Nosely, in Leicestershire, which fact would no doubt have saved him all that tedious journey among the Norwegians to get a "small bark of twenty-five tons" to bring half a dozen emigrants to New England.

We should not omit to notice, in passing, the slur attempted to be cast upon Sir Henry Vane, on whose arrival in Boston, Winthrop thus respectfully and sincerely remarked. "Here came also [in 1635] one Mr. Henry Vane, son and heir to Sir Henry Vane, comptroller of the King's house, who, being a young gentleman [only 23 years of age!] of excellent parts, and had been employed by his father, when he was ambassador, in foreign affairs; yet, being called to the obedience of the gospel, forsook honors and preferments of the Court to enjoy the ordinances of Christ in their purity here." Now there never was a man in the country, probably, young or old, from its first settlement to the present time, who conducted himself with more prudence, Christian forbearance, and resignation to what he believed to be his duty, than this "young gentleman" did. The ma-

* See HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF BOSTON, page 187-8.

jority of the people thought him more fit for their Governor than any other, and while he was Governor, no one can doubt nor even presume to say that he did not acquit himself to the general satisfaction of the people; and when he was left out of office by a manoeuvre of the minority, his conduct was that of a high-minded and good citizen. Winthrop was his rival, and did not treat him quite so well as he probably wished he had done, several years after. Mr. Vane bore all in silence, and left the country much to the regret of the people, who, on the occasion, showed him every attention in their power. Of this pious and conscientious pilgrim, Winthrop's Editor remarks:—"Few men have done less good with greater reputation than this statesman, whose fame rings in history too loudly to require my aid in its diffusion. The brief but busy exercise of his faculties here, is exhibited with sufficient minuteness by our author, in whose pages is found no deficiency of respect towards the fanatic, who was too much honored, in his early years, when exalted as the rival of the father of Massachusetts."

We will now hear what Winthrop says of Mr. Vane in the beginning of the Antinomian controversy. "The Governor, Mr. Vane, a wise and godly gentleman, held, with Mr. Cotton and many others, the indwelling of the person of the Holy Ghost in a believer," &c. Several years after Mr. Vane had left the country, and some of the Colony's agents were in trouble in England, Winthrop says, "it pleased God to stir up such friends as Sir Henry Vane, who had some time lived at Boston, and though he might have taken occasion against us for some dishonor which he apprehended to have been unjustly put upon him here, yet both now and at other times he showed himself a true friend to New England, and a man of a noble and generous mind." Now we should think that this ought to have kept his Editor quiet, at least.—See Winthrop, ii. 304.

Passing over numerous points open to criticism and animadversion, we shall in the next place dispose of a question which had its rise in a careless blunder. We refer to the question (if it can be called a question) whether or not John Endicott was the *first* Governor of Massachusetts. In the first place it is proper to state how the blunder arose, by which *first* Governor was transferred to Winthrop. It will have been seen in the early part of this notice, that Mr. Noah Webster was the Editor of the edition of Winthrop's Journal published at Hartford in 1790; and that in the title-page of that edition, "First Governor of Massachusetts," follows the name of the Author, "John Winthrop, Esq." Now that this was a mere blunder, or inadvertence, will, we think, clearly appear from the following observations:—

First, Mr. Webster was not then a critical writer of history. He had read enough of it to acquire a taste for it, especially for that of New England; that when he supervised Winthrop's Journal he did not write with that precision which he did afterwards. This is evident from the fact of

his saying in his preface to the work, that *it contained every important occurrence, from Winthrop's first embarking for America to the year 1644*. It is only necessary to ask, who would make that assertion now? Mr. Webster says too, that the blanks and omissions in his edition *were few and of no considerable consequence*. We know from Mr. Webster's own frank confession, that he said this *not knowing* what the *blanks and omissions* were, they having been made because the best reader of old manuscripts he could find *could not make them out*; therefore, how should he know? Other similar inaccuracies in Mr. Webster's short introductory matter might be produced, but these are sufficient to show, that scrupulous exactness in his statements, of certain particulars, was not thought of.

Second,—the superior growth and expansion of the settlement in and about Boston, gave a kind of general impression everywhere, that, as it was certainly the *greatest*, so it was the *first* settlement. This general impression led Mr. Webster into his error—there can be no doubt of it. It may be jeered and denied because *we* say it. That will not be of much advantage towards maintaining so palpable an error. The present Editor of Winthrop thinks, and we believe he has said, that the spot, including Boston and its immediate vicinity, is the paradise of the world. This is not mentioned with any view to dispute the point with him; but only to show how much superior he views this vicinity to all other places on the globe; that therefore, as it was the *first* place in the world (which is not disputed) the first Governor there, was the *first* Governor in the world! With such notions in his head, how could he think otherwise? With these ideas, and happening not to question the fact in his own mind, nor to converse upon the subject with anybody, and then meeting with Mr. Webster's blunder, he was in the right mood to be deceived effectually, and he was deceived, and he ought to have owned it long ago.

As a proof that Mr. Savage was deceived, or rather deceived himself with regard to the first Governor of Massachusetts, we will state one fact, which we think is perfectly conclusive. Happening to be in the library of a certain institution in Boston, one day, he was asked by a gentleman, how he came to call Winthrop *first Governor*, in his edition of the Journal? At this question he looked up, evincing a good deal of surprise. This was evidently the *first* time the question had ever entered his mind. As his surprise began to subside, he replied,—“Well—he *was* first Governor.” After a few words of discussion, Mr. Savage appealed to Hutchinson, saying, “Hutchinson will settle it.” He then took down from the shelves, and proceeded to examine that Historian. When he had satisfied himself that Hutchinson did not sustain him, he replaced that Author, said no more upon the subject, and soon after left.

The subject hardly deserves to be treated with gravity, but as there have

been some long and labored arguments upon it, pro and con, something more may be expected in this examination.

Much time might have been saved, had Mr. Savage had the ingenuousness to have acknowledged that he had been mistaken, and had unwittingly been led to state what he saw was an error, as soon as his attention was called to it. Unhappily this is not a characteristic of that gentleman. When *he* has said a fact is thus, thus he means it shall be, if any or every other fact can be bent or twisted to make it wear the shade he has given it.

It is rather singular, that in his first edition of Winthrop, in which the name of Endicott so often occurs, in which the Editor himself has frequent occasion to mention "Governor Endicott" under years before Winthrop was thought of as Governor at all, that it did not occur to him, that when there was certainly but one Governor, and that one Governor was Endicott; that he, of necessity, must be first and last, until another should be chosen.

The "idle question" that Endicott was not chosen under precisely the same circumstances that Winthrop was, deserves no consideration whatever. Circumstances are continually changing. Will such considerations make John Hancock first Governor of Massachusetts, because the Revolution had entirely changed the order of things? Will it prove that Samuel Adams was first Governor, and that Hancock was only "Captain," because a great change had taken place, and that his Government was more permanent and important than Mr. Hancock's, which had just emerged out of the Revolution? This would be nonsense indeed. But there is quite as much sense in it as there is in denying that Endicott was first Governor, because he did not come over with the *second* company of emigrants which happened to be a little larger than the first which came with Endicott!

Everybody acquainted with the main facts in the case, thought, that when Mr. Savage issued a new edition of Winthrop, he would leave out the "first" to his Governor, and either say nothing about it in his notes, or if he said anything, would say he had incautiously followed the title-page of the Hartford edition; but the only place where he has dropped first Governor to Winthrop is on the portrait. This is one step towards bringing the matter right. While, if his weight of argument to sustain his old error, were equal to the weight of type employed in his immense note, it would remain beyond hope of refutation. And yet in his *weighty* note, the Editor says, "An idle question, as it seems to me, was raised, a short time since, whether Endicott should not, instead of Winthrop, be entitled first Governor of Massachusetts."

To raise what mist he can, Mr. Savage cites "Mr. Felt," as saying in

his Annals of Salem, that "Roger Conant preceded both Endicott and Winthrop" as Governor. Roger Conant, Mr. Savage well knows, has nothing to do with this question, any more than John Oldham, or any others who were over here before the formation of the Massachusetts Company, and happened to remain until that Company sent over a Colony. In a few simple interrogatories lie the whole length and breadth of this "idle question." They may be thus put:—

First,—Did the Massachusetts Company send out its *first* Colony to make a settlement in what is now Massachusetts *without* a Governor?

Second,—If that Company did send out a Colony *with* a Governor, who was he? And did he, or did he not have all the power of governing a Colony conferred upon him in exact accordance with the Charter of the Company and the laws of England?

Third,—Did not the *first* Colony sent out by the Massachusetts Company make a permanent settlement at Salem, Charlestown, &c., in 1628?

Fourth,—Where was Mr. John Winthrop during that early period of the operations of the *first* Colony?

"But," says Winthrop's Editor, "Endicott never was Governor of the Company in England; Endicott did not bring over the Charter."—With just as much relevancy he might say, "Endicott was never Governor of the Plymouth Company, whose lands the Massachusetts Company purchased, and that he was never King of England."

By the way, there is one thing we do believe,—namely, that if Endicott had been King of England instead of Charles Stuart, the Charter would not have been brought out of that country, against the laws of the realm, as it in fact was. And this leads us to the following question:—

Did that act of the Company, in taking away the Charter out of England, give Winthrop any claim to being called *first* Governor? He certainly, so far as known to us, is the *first* Governor who took away a Charter under such circumstances. But that this fact entitles him to be considered first Governor of Massachusetts, is extremely ridiculous. He acted under the direction of the Company, and as affairs turned, that illegal act of the Massachusetts Company was a very happy circumstance for New England.

Let us go to Winthrop's own account in his Journal. *He* never even dreamed that he was *first* Governor. He never considered himself Governor at all, saving of those who came over with him in "the fleet," till he was elected, several months after his arrival at Charlestown. Did he take the Government out of Mr. Endicott's hands on his arrival? No such thing. He considered himself only as an assistant to Mr. Endicott. Read his Journal, page 30-1, Vol. I.—Arriving at Salem on the 12th of June, 1630,

and being visited on board his ship by Gov. Endicott, he says, "We that were of the Assistants, and some other gentlemen, and some of the women, and our Captain, returned with them to Nahumkeck, where we supped with a good venison pastry and good beer, and at night we returned to our ship, but some of the women stayed behind."

Now will anybody pretend that Winthrop considered himself as superseding Endicott? It appears to us, that if the facts, the plain simple facts as they stand recorded, be attended to, it will inevitably *supersede* the necessity of any more long arguments to prove "a clear case."

The assertion that "Endicott could not be the Governor which the Charter required," is unworthy attention, when no pretence is set up that he was not made Governor *according* to the Charter. We have elsewhere shown where, how and when, Winthrop came in general Governor of Massachusetts.* To deny that he was elected Governor at Charlestown, on the 23d of August, 1630, cannot be done without impeaching an Authority never yet impeached. Edward Johnson attended that election, beyond question, himself, and no particular in his book is more minutely and particularly recorded.

In speaking of the Editor's defective chronology (a science which he seems very much to reverence) we did not refer to any particular cases wherein he had erred. We might refer to many, but one will serve our purpose, which is to put the reader of the notes to the new edition of Winthrop on his guard. For example:—On page 228, Volume I, it is said that there is no article in Dr. Allen's Biographical Dictionary upon General Gibbons. Now if the reader refers to that work he *will* find an article on General Gibbons. When that note was made, (and being made for the year 1825,) it was true, but when made for any year since 1832, it is false. Few people could suppose that the Editor, in his new edition, was referring to an obsolete edition of a work of the kind printed half a century before, to the exclusion of a new and vastly improved edition. Therefore, taking these, and all other similar things into account, we much prefer Mr. Savage's first edition to his second. That can be referred to understandingly, while references to this are open to serious objections.

The limits to which we are confined in this examination prevent our remarking upon many points deserving attention; but having already filled the pages allotted for it, we are "compelled" to draw to a close. We cannot however dismiss the subject without adverting to one other point; and that is respecting the Deed or Grant of New Hampshire by certain Indian Sagamores to Mr. John Wheelwright in 1629. That any such

* HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF BOSTON, page 94.

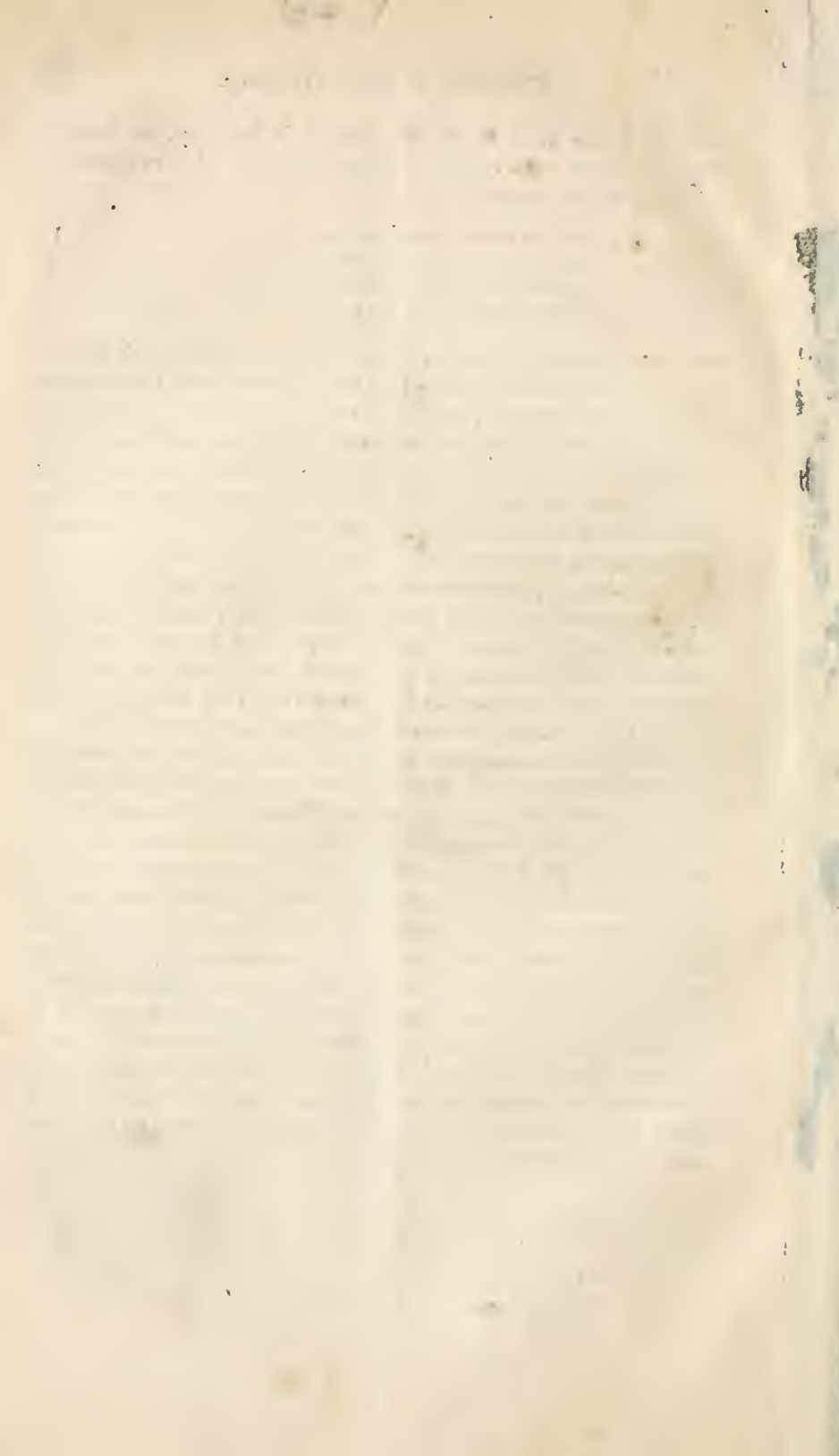
conveyance was made to Mr. Wheelwright in that year, the Editor of Winthrop denies with a confidence *almost* alarming. He was sufficiently positive in his first edition, but in his second,

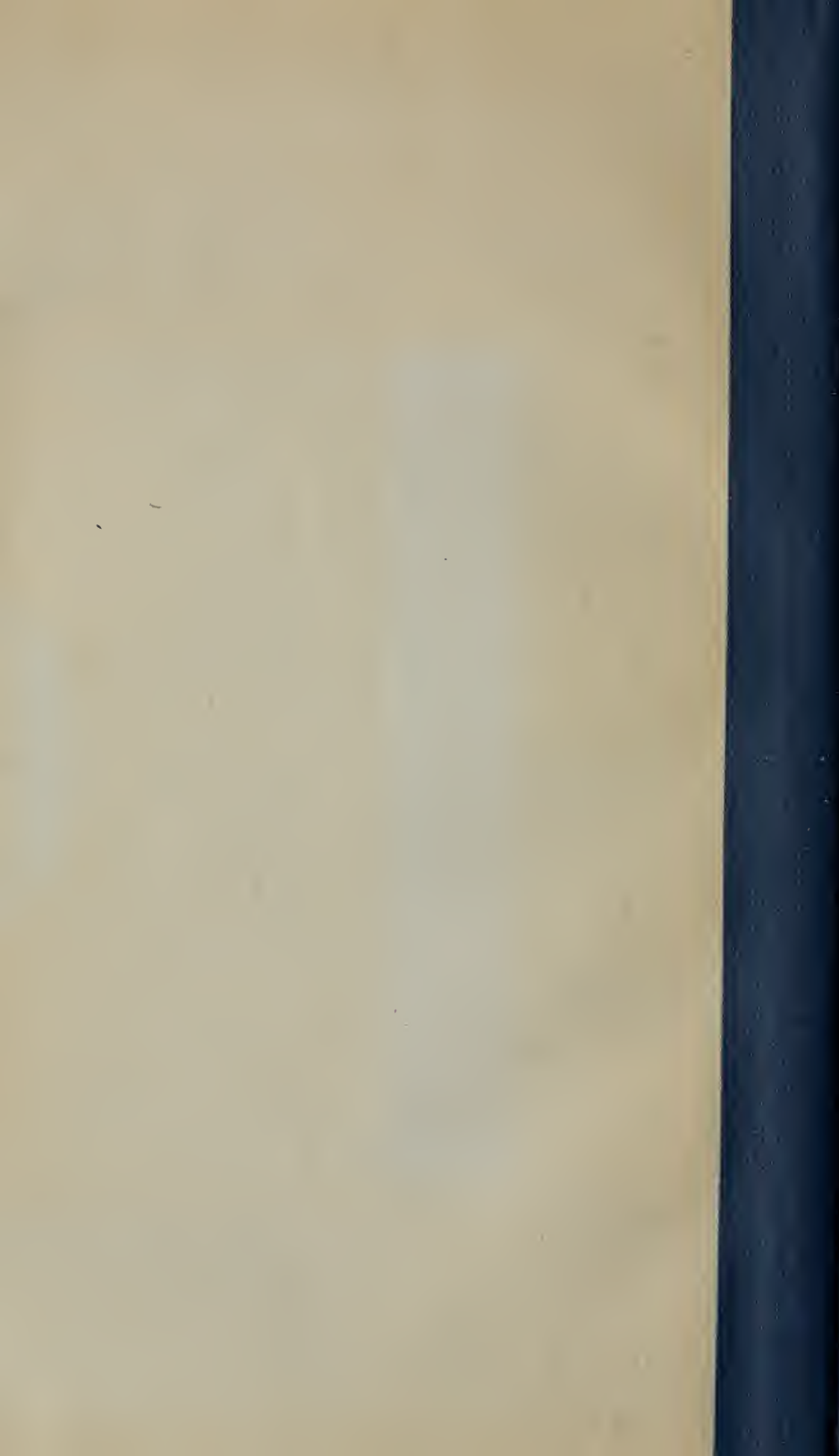
“As if the Kraken, monarch of the sea,
Wallowing abroad in his immensity,
By polar storms and lightning shafts assailed,
Wedged with ice mountains here, had fought and failed;”

and, in his expiring agonies, for the want of new weapons with which to preserve himself, he has made a very unfortunate effort to show his contempt of those who differ from his opinions.

With regard to the instrument which Mr. Savage denounces as a forgery, we will only remark, that the subject is in competent hands, and in due time the result will be given to the public. *We* never promised or proposed to give our views upon it in the Register, as Mr. Savage improperly insinuates in his Winthrop, Vol. I, page 504; and, he has purposely or by mistake, misquoted a deposition of Mr. Wheelwright which we published some three years ago; which deposition—truly copied—happens to shake his theory very essentially. Notwithstanding the vast labor which Mr. Savage has performed to prove the deed a *forgery*, he has by no means settled the question. It yet remains open, and even *he* may be surprised should he live to see what *can* be said on the other side.

Upon the whole we regard it as very unfortunate that the second edition of “The History of New England” has been published; unfortunate for the Editor as well as to the cause of History. Unfortunate because it often makes the Editor appear to great disadvantage; and because by its issue with its many and manifest deformities, an edition, such as is truly desirable, may be a good while deferred. Small indeed are the *valuable* additions to this second edition, and no one can tell *what* the additions are without a minute and tedious comparison of the two editions together. The truth seems to be, that the Editor was heartily tired of his subject, and let it go to a new edition without due reflection; or, that he considered no improvement was necessary, or, that none could be made, and that perfection was already attained, both in manner and matter. We have been frank in rendering our judgment upon these in general. If editors of antiquarian works profit by it hereafter, to them we shall have been of some service.





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Winthrop, John. A journal...

[Droke, Samuel Gardner]

A review of Winthrop's journal.

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